

May 9

Acts 8:9-24

“Receiving the Holy Ghost?”

⁹ But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:
¹⁰ To whom they all gave heed,

from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. ¹¹ And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. ¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. ¹⁴ Now when the apostles which were at

Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received **the word of God**, they sent unto them Peter and John: ¹⁵ Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: ¹⁶ (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) ¹⁷ Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ Saying, Give me also this power, that on

whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. ²⁰ But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. ²¹ Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. ²³ For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. ²⁴ Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for

me, that none of these things
which ye have spoken come
upon me.

Thoughts and **Considerations**

The word, “him” is used
in the Authorized King
James Version
(1666/1769) in reference
to the Holy Ghost. Some
more present-day
versions just say “the
Holy Spirit”. That is

possibly to avoid gender issues or just because we can't say for sure if the Holy Spirit is actually any gender. The pronoun "he" is commonly used and that may just be the choice of the translators. Nonetheless, we would not want to get caught up in discussions about gender while missing the most crucial points and

concerns.

First, we learn of a man, Simon, who, practiced sorcery and bewitched people. Some may dismiss that as nonsense, superstition, or a mistranslation. They may say Simon just had charisma or was just skilled in the art of persuasion or even was

simply a great magician;
perhaps a predecessor of
the Great Houdini.

However one may wish to
understand the words, it
is plain that Simon did
have some measure of
favor and influence over
the group.

Scripture specifies that
the people there revered
him so highly that they

thought of him as actually being, God's power. They said, in verse 10, "this man IS the great power of God". Simon seemed to revel in the fame and was not interested in correcting their error.

Next, the word, "saw", in verse 18, at least implies that Simon, with his own natural eyes, witnessed

something which indicated the people had received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands. What did he observe at that point in time?

Moving along in the passage, Simon believed and was baptized (verse 13), but when he, “saw that the Holy Ghost was

given to the new converts
when the apostles placed
their hands on them,
Simon offered the
apostles money for the
ability to do the same
thing (verse 18).

Now this is really
interesting. This man had
“believed” and had
actually been baptized.
Yet, Simon still had the

same lust for power and fame. And it was that control and reverence that brought him money—the same money he was willing to use to gain more power.

What does this tell us? Scripture in no way indicates that Simon pretended to believe. It says he did believe.

Apparently, he was baptized based on that belief. Still, he did not change right away. Seeing the impartation of the Holy Ghost on others did not prompt Simon to ask for the Holy Ghost. No. Though newly baptized and having believed, he was still who he was—Simon the Sorcerer.

Is that a horrible thing to say? It may be, but it is Scripture that provides the story; and it does not sugar-coat the account.

Some have said, “he went down in the baptismal waters a dry sinner and came up out of them a wet one.”

One important concern is that Simon, unlike the

others, had NOT received the Holy Ghost. Could it be that without the Holy Ghost, he could not *hope* to be or be expected to be any more than he was—a baptized, believing bewitcher?

Is it possible that, like Simon, there are some today who have genuinely believed

that Jesus is the Messiah,
have been baptized in his
name, but still live
spiritually powerless,
unholy lives while
constantly pursuing
power in this world?

It seems that after Simon
was scolded by the
apostle Peter, he repented
by asking for prayer, but

did he ever receive the
Holy Ghost?

Can remorse be a
substitute for receipt
of the Holy Ghost?

It has been debated
for many years, by both
theologians and
non-theologians alike,
whether or not the Holy
Ghost exists, but if the

receipt of the Holy Ghost is available today, who is qualified to pass the Holy Ghost on to others? How did they receive the Holy Ghost and how do they give the Holy Ghost?

How is the Holy Ghost recognized? How does the Holy Ghost operate in the lives of True Believers?

Is it possible that,
even with the indwelling
of the Holy Ghost,
Believers can live,
shall we say, less than
wholly holy lives—
with imperfections?
Is it realistic to expect the
Holy Ghost to manifest
the same exact way in
every single Holy Ghost-
filled child of God?

If the Holy Ghost were to suddenly change every newly believing and baptized person into copies of one another, wouldn't that take away the freedom of choice?

It makes sense that the gift of the Holy Ghost is tailored to

the individual just as a parent might give one child, who has shown interest in music, a musical instrument, while giving another child who loves to read, a book. The point is that recipients of the Holy Ghost do not dictate anything about the Holy Ghost's operation. Finally, receiving the Holy Ghost is a good thing— a

very good thing, and perhaps we should not set expectations and requirements regarding process, timing, proof or “evidence”, or anything else.

Maybe gratitude for and submission to the Holy Ghost is the best way to benefit and grow.